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*The Reasonableness and Necessity of*  
**PUBLICK WORSHIP.**

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A  
**SERMON,**

Preached before the  
**SYNOD of Dumfries,**

At Dumfries, October 11. 1743.

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By **ROBERT PETRIE** Minister of  
*the Gospel at CANONBIE.*

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## The Reasonableness and Necessity of PUBLICK WORSHIP.

HEB. xiii. 15, 16, 17.

*By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name. But to do Good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves.*

**A**LL Mankind are agreed in this first Principle of natural Religion, *That there is a God (a)*: Which implies not only the Notion of *Existence*, but also  
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of

(a) Tho' this has been denied or doubted by some particular Persons, yet it is evident from the History of the World, that Men in general have believed it; which, 'tis presumed

of *Intelligence, Power, Wisdom*, and especially *Dominion*. For if God governs not the World, it is much the same to us whether he exists or not: But if our Lives are in his Hand; if he upholds all things by his Power, and exercises an immediate and absolute Authority over all Nature, it is of the last Importance to us to know what Regards are due to him from such Creatures as we are, and to behave towards him in such a manner, as we have Ground to believe he will approve of.

Now when we conceive God, as a Being of infinite Perfection, and the Sovereign Lord of the Universe, we are naturally inspired with Esteem and Reverence, with a Desire of his Favour, and a Dread of his Displeasure: And to express these Sentiments and Affections by certain Actions directed immediately towards him, is *divine Worship*.

That we should in this manner acknowledge him, and own our Dependence upon him

sumed, will warrant the Expression, *all Mankind*. And whereas, the *Epicureans* admitted the Existence of a Deity, but denied his Providence; yet as they likewise excluded him from the Creation of the World, and complimented their Gods with an indolent Existence, probably to avoid the Punishment of Atheism only, they have been generally held among the number of the few Atheists that have opposed this universal Notion.



him, seems to be the Voice of the whole World: For there scarce ever was a Nation, where Men have not some way or other declared their Sense of the Being and Providence of God; and wherever they have been joined together in a common publick Interest, there also Institutions of publick Worship have been established: And therefore, from the general Consent and Practice of all Men in all Ages, we may be allowed to infer, that, *To worship God publickly, together with the Society to which we belong*, is another Principle of natural Religion.

Before Life and Immortality were brought to Light by the Son of God, publick Worship consisted chiefly in certain mysterious Rites, but especially in offering Beasts in Sacrifice; a Custom which universally prevailed almost over the whole Earth, and which, by the astonishing Event of our Saviour's Sufferings, appears to have proceeded from a very important Cause. *But he having by one Offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, these Rites were abolished; and a reasonable Service, a pure spiritual Worship was introduced; according to which we are required to offer in Sacrifice, not the *Fruit* of our Bodies, Fields or Flocks, but the *Fruit* of our Lips, in Adoration, Prayer and Praise, in the Name

of our great High Priest *Jesus Christ*. By him therefore, says the Apostle, *let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise, &c.*

But lest we should rest in such Acts of Worship as the End, forgetting that it is a most acceptable Service, and one main Design of our Prayers and Praises being enjoined us, to imitate the divine Being in Goodness, Love and Benevolence to Mankind, it is added in the next Verse; *But to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.* The End we ought to aim at in all our Addresses, is to raise our Minds to the Admiration, Reverence and Love of God, and to engage us to the Love and Practice of Goodness to one another.

Thus the Light of Nature and Revelation equally teach us; *First*, That God is to be worshipped, and that publicly, and before the World; for of such Worship, it is evident from the Context, the Apostle is speaking; besides, that it is the Doctrine every where inculcated throughout the Scriptures. *Secondly*, That publick Worship is a Means of begetting in us such Dispositions and Virtues, as are necessary to the present Happiness of Mankind: So the Apostle here insinuates; and so all Nations have understood

stood it, as is evident from their religious Institutions.

There is this also in publick Religion, confirmed both by general Practice and by Revelation, that, for the right Peformance of divine Worship, there must be an Order of Men, separated from the common Affairs of Life, and consecrated to this Service: These amongst all Nations have been held in Honour; and towards these the Text recommends a respectful submissive Behaviour. *Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves.*

But here it may be suggested by such as disown divine Revelation, That all this Matter of publick Religion and Priesthood has no other Foundation than Ignorance, Superstition and Enthusiasm. “ Does not true  
 “ Worship consist, *they will ask*, in our  
 “ having right Notions and just Sentiments  
 “ of the Being and Perfections of God,  
 “ in suitable Affections of Soul towards  
 “ him, and in a Course of Actions agree-  
 “ able to right Reason? if he knows our  
 “ most secret Thoughts and Desires, to what  
 “ Purpose utter Words, or perform external  
 “ Acts of Worship? And are not all Actions  
 “ of this kind Expressions of our Thoughts,  
 “ and then only necessary, when these can-  
 “ not otherwise be discovered? But will



“ we pretend to inform him who is omni-  
 “ fcient; or move him with our Cries, who  
 “ is unchangeable? Or will he think to  
 “ gain his Favour, as if he were an earthly  
 “ Monarch, by flattering Speeches and sub-  
 “ missive Prostrations? Is not Religion  
 “ entirely a personal Thing between God  
 “ and a Man's own Conscience, in which  
 “ the rest of the World cannot join, and  
 “ have no Concern? And if all this be so,  
 “ why the Institution of Priests? Have  
 “ they not in all Ages been a turbulent Set  
 “ of Men, who have aimed at nothing but  
 “ Power and enslaving Mankind? Nay, is  
 “ not all external Religion an Encroach-  
 “ ment upon natural Liberty, and destru-  
 “ ctive of the Interests of Society? at least,  
 “ is it any further useful than to overawe  
 “ the Vulgar, and make them obedient to  
 “ Government?

Now, in answer to these Questions, we shall endeavour to shew,

- I. That publick Worship is reasonable in itself.
- II. That it is necessary to the Well-being of Society. And,
- III. That there must be an Order of Men to regulate and preside in the Affairs of publick



publick Worship; to whom, upon account of their Office, Honour and Respect are due.

1. *First*, I am to shew that publick Worship is reasonable in itself; and as my Business will be chiefly with those who may refuse to submit to the Authority of the sacred Scriptures; I shall not urge it against them, but shall reason from such Principles as they themselves do not controvert.

We shall take it for granted that Man, being endued with Reason, is capable to know that he is a Creature formed by an infinitely powerful, wise and good Being, who is also the Preserver and Governor of the Universe, and who is intimately present with him, and perfectly knows both his Thoughts and Temper and Actions; that his own Happiness depends upon his Favour, and his Misery flows from his Displeasure; and hence that certain Regards are due from him to this Being; particularly Esteem, Reverence, Love and Gratitude, a Sense of his precarious necessitous Condition, and of his absolute Dependence upon God: All which lays a sure immoveable Foundation for private personal Worship. But besides this Relation, which every individual stands in to his Maker, and from which result the Reasonableness

sonableness and Duty of such Worship; Men being made for Society (at least Society being necessary to their Well-being, and Mankind accordingly being every where incorporated into Bodies politic, and united together under certain Forms of Government) there arises from hence another Relation between God and them, which establishes a like Reasonableness and Necessity of external publick Worship. Thus we must consider ourselves in this twofold Capacity, as Creatures having a Relation only to our Creator; and likewise as connected with our Fellow-Creatures, and subject to the Laws of Society. In the former View, our Worship and our whole Behaviour is entirely a personal Thing between God and our own Consciences, in which the rest of the World have no Concern; in the latter, both our Actions and Worship regard the Society of which we are Members. In this Sense, we are as a Family of Children, living under the Protection and Authority of a common Father; whom it becomes us to acknowledge and reverence by our outward Behaviour, as well as in private, or in our Thoughts and Sentiments: And as it would be highly absurd in a Child to imagine that he owed his Parent no Regard, unless when they were together alone; it is no less absurd to say that

that the only Worship we are to perform to God, ought to be personal, and in secret; for it is to be remembered, that we have no other Way of acknowledging him publickly, but by worshipping him publickly.

Further, is it not reasonable we should publickly do Homage to the Almighty Lord of the Universe? We will not say he is delighted with our Homage, or that there is any Worth in external Actions; but may not a King require publick Homage from his Subjects, for other Purposes than gratifying his own Vanity? May he not justly demand a publick Testimony of their Respect and Obedience; whereby they may be mutually confirmed in their Esteem of him, in their Zeal for his Honour, and in their faithful Allegiance and Submission to his Government? And what other publick Testimony is it possible for Men to give of their Dependence upon God, of their Love and Obedience, besides publick Worship? So that it is not only fit in itself we should join together in worshipping the supreme Being, but likewise reasonable, and of the greatest Advantage, considered in its Effects and Consequences. For,

When we hear Almighty God solemnly invoked, when we ourselves join in the Invocation, does not this strongly impress us  
with



with a Sense of the divine Perfections and Presence? When the Glories of his Power and Majesty and Greatness are represented to our View, does not this raise our Esteem and Admiration? When we run over the amazing Instances of his Goodness to us, and to the rest of Mankind, are we not inspired with Gratitude and Love? When we humbly confess our Sins before him, are we not led to hate and avoid them for the future? When we make Supplication to him for what we need, does not this teach us to depend upon him? And does not such a direct and immediate Address to the Divine Being leave an habitual Sense upon our Minds of his All-ruling Providence, of his Omniscience and Omnipresence, of his Holiness and Goodness? And will not such a Sense and Feeling of God have a good Effect upon our Behaviour afterwards? And being trained up from our Childhood in such Exercises of Worship, and the good Impressions we thereby receive, being always kept alive by the Returns of Devotion, when we are introduced again, as it were, into the Presence of God, and our Thoughts immediately directed towards him, can we forget our Dependence upon him, or the Esteem and Reverence and Love we owe him? Can we, thus habitually employed, forget the exalted



ed Dignity of our reasonable Nature, and that we live and act under his immediate Inspection.

And though all this may be said to hold equally true of publick and private Worship, yet it is from the former alone we are taught, and kept in mind to perform the latter; nor could any Regard to a superior invisible Power be otherwise preserved among Men: For let us only suppose all publick Worship is laid aside; by what Means shall the Knowledge of God, and a Sense of his Government and Providence be continued in the World? If true, personal Worship consists in having right Apprehensions and Sentiments of his Being and Perfections, and in right Affections of Soul towards him, how shall these be acquired? If the Fear of the Almighty is the strongest Restraint upon our wrong Passions, and the most powerful Motive to a right Conduct, who shall inculcate this Fear upon us? If this School of divine Knowledge were suppressed, would not a few Years wear out all Sense of Religion from the Minds of Men, and sink them down into lawless ungovernable Savages?

But if they are made to know, to contemplate, imitate and obey their great Creator, publick Worship must be highly reasonable,  
and

and absolutely necessary, as being the only Means of instructing them from their early Years, and of keeping them ever after in mind *That there is a God; That he governs the World; that he is the Author of all our Enjoyments; that he directs every Event by his just and wise Providence; and, that he will finally reward or punish us according to our Behaviour.* Whoever therefore believes that there is a God, must likewise believe that it is reasonable and necessary he should be publicly worshipped; a Conclusion acknowledged by all Mankind; for wherever Society and Government have obtained, there also religious Institutions have taken place, and been enforced by express Sanctions.

But perhaps it will be objected, That publick Worship does not in reality produce such Effects as these above-mentioned; and that the greatest part of those who duly attend upon it, do not in any measure live up to the Obligations of Religion: But is it not evident that its natural Tendency is to promote Religion and Virtue? Certainly it does it in some, and if not in all, the Fault must be charged upon themselves; and they must be wilfully culpable. Besides, though Men do not improve the Advantage of publick Worship as they might and ought to do;

do; yet without such Advantage, would they not be far worse than they are? Some are sincerely religious; many are kept within the Bounds of Decency; and the Wicked and Immoral are under some Restraints from their Consciences, which otherwise they would not be. Few, if any, who frequent the Worship of God, arrive at such a Height of Impiety as to be void of all Regard to the Supreme Being. Thus I have endeavoured to prove that publick Worship is reasonable in itself; and shall now proceed to shew, *That it is necessary to the well-being of Society.*

II. *First*, Without Honesty, Justice and Veracity, there can be no safe Commerce or Intercourse; no Trust or Confidence among Men. Now we must be bound to the Practice of these and the like social Virtues either by a moral Sense of Right and Wrong implanted in our Minds, like our natural Appetites; or by the Exercise of our Reasoning Faculties, tracing out the Fitness of things; or by both; or by the Fear of Punishment and Hope of Reward. As to the moral Sense, and even the Deductions of Reason superadded (let them be imagined ever so strong) they cannot of themselves be a sufficient Obligation to moral Virtues for Mankind in general; What they may do in  
a few



a few of a refined philosophic Taste, I shall not dispute; but the bulk of Men never were, and never will be Philosophers. It is the Prospect of the greatest Good, and the Fear of the greatest Evil, which alone can command their Passions, and determine their Actions; and this surely is no other than the Hope of the divine Favour, and the Fear of the divine Displeasure. When Men consider themselves as bound to Truth, Justice and Honesty, by the Authority of that Being, who perceives even their most secret Thoughts, and is able, at all Times, to inflict severe Punishment upon the Transgressors; if any thing oblige them to their Duty, this will do it; and that publick Worship is the most effectual, the only effectual Means of impressing them with these Regards to the Deity, I have already shewed. The Power of human Laws may be pretended to be sufficient for the Purposes of Society; but if People are once grown irreligious, the best Laws that ever were made will be openly violated, or artfully evaded. Men indeed may, in some Instances, be confined by external Force or Terror, like wild Beasts; but they will be no longer confined than they can break their Chain; and no Chain made by mortal Hands will be strong enough to hold them fast.



2. The only Security that, in many Cases, can be exacted of Men for their Fidelity in discharging a Trust, or their Integrity in declaring the Truth, is the Sanction of an *Oath*. If they are not governed by the Fear of God, this will be no Tie upon them; and what Prejudice the want of such an Obligation would be to the Interests of Society, needs not be enlarged upon. On the other Hand, if the Influence of Religion prevails; wherever the Solemnity of an *Oath* is interposed, Honesty, Faith, Candour, and Sincerity will be inviolable. And not only in this Instance, but in all our Transactions with one another, a Regard to the Supreme Being will direct our Conduct: And if any thing can create and preserve upon our Spirits such Regard, it must be the Exercises of publick Worship: For the glorious Excellencies of the Perfections of God being here so frequently set before our Eyes; his Power and Providence, his Love of Right and hatred of Wrong being made so familiar to our Thoughts; it cannot but often occur to us in the Affairs of Life, that we are acting under his Eye, tho' no doubt such Reflexions will occur oftner to some than to others, and make a deeper Impression, and have a better Effect upon them.

3. The very Acts of publick Worship serve

to form us to right Dispositions towards our Fellow-creatures. For, when laying aside the Distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, with united Supplications we address our common Father, who regardeth not the Rich more than the Poor, and before whom all the Distinctions that arise from external Circumstances vanish; when thus prostrated in the same Condition of Abasement, Want and Misery, we are not only put in mind to imitate him in Justice, Mercy, Love and Benevolence, but to suppress the Swellings of Anger, Envy, Pride, Malice and Disdain; and to cultivate the social Affections of Humanity, Kindness and Compassion.

4. It is generally owned that Atheism is inconsistent with the Being of Society; or, in other Words, that Society cannot subsist without Religion; because there are no human Ties strong enough to hold Men together, and bind them to a mutual right Behaviour, if they are not under the Awe of an invisible supreme Power. But as we cannot discern the Hearts of Men, we have no other Way to discover whether they are Atheists or not, but by their worshipping God. When therefore those of a Society join together in adoring and invoking the Deity, they give all the Evidence and Security they possibly can give, that they acknowledge the Divine Being

Being and Providence; and upon the Matter, they call God to Witness, and plight their Faith to one another, that they will be just and honest, and faithful in their mutual Dealings. There may indeed be Hypocrites, who under this specious Shew cover the Treachery of their Designs; but it is evidently not the genuine Tendency of Worship, to produce or encourage Hypocrisy; for accidental Abuses there is no Remedy (a).

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And

(a) Mr. Bayle maintains that Atheism is not inconsistent with the Being of Society, and that not only a Society of Atheists may subsist, but that in it all the Ends of social Life and Happiness may be attained: But the general Opinion of the World is against him; and the Example of all Ages is a stronger Proof than can be brought from any metaphysical Arguments, that Atheism tends to the Ruin of Society, as will be shewn in the Sequel of this Discourse.

Another eminent Author insinuates, that we may sometimes expect Virtue where there is no Religion, when he tells us, (*Characterist. Vol. 2. p. 2.*) " That we have known  
 " People, who having the Appearance of great Zeal in Religion, have yet wanted the common Affections of Humanity, and shewn themselves extremely degenerate and corrupt. Others again, who have paid little Regard to Religion, and have been considered as meer Atheists, have yet been observed to practise the Rules of Morality, and act in many Cases with such good Meaning and Affection towards Mankind, as might seem to force an Acknowledgement of their being virtuous. And in general, we find mere moral Principles of such Weight, that in our Dealings with Men we are seldom satisfied by the fullest Assurance given us of their Zeal in Religion, till we hear something further of their Character. If we are told a Man is religious; we still ask, *What are his Morals?* But  
 " if



And whatever be a Man's Practice, as the secret Motives of his Conduct cannot be discovered by us; if he does not acknowledge God before the World, by worshipping him, we must suppose either that he is an Atheist, or that he cannot in Conscience worship him according to that Form which obtains in his Country: Which, by the by, is an unanswerable Argument for tolerating different

“ if we hear at first that he has honest moral Principles, and  
 “ is a Man of natural Justice and good Temper, we seldom  
 “ think of the other Question, Whether he be religious and  
 “ devout.” Yet what is here alledged does by no means  
 prove that Virtue may be found where there is no Religion.  
 As to moral, virtuous Atheists, I presume they are very rare,  
 and a single Instance or two proves nothing: But if we are  
 told a Man has honest moral Principles, will we not naturally  
 infer he believes an over-ruling Providence, though perhaps  
 he makes not so much shew of Religion, and is not in  
 fact so devout as some others? But if we are told at the  
 same time that he is an Atheist, we will not be forward to  
 trust his moral Principles. And as to great Zeal in Religion,  
 when not accompanied with Humanity and Morality; it must  
 proceed either from gross Ignorance, or gross Hypocrisy,  
 neither of which belongs to Religion, nor has the least  
 Countenance from publick Worship. The most inhumane  
 Cruelties have been committed even in the Christian  
 World, by Persons who have imagined, or been made believe  
 that they were acting in obedience to the Will of God: But  
 no one dares say, that Christianity authorises Cruelty, or  
 any other Crime. If then the best Religion has been perverted  
 to the worst Purposes, does this give any Ground to  
 distinguish Religion from Virtue, or to suppose that the former  
 may be where the latter is not? Surely the Abuse of a  
 Thing can never be the Thing itself. And this also vindicates  
 the Christian Religion from the Mischiefs which it is said to  
 have occasioned in the World, if Men had been truly  
 Christians, such Mischiefs would never have happened.



ferent Modes of Worship: For if there is but one uniform Method in Society, there may be a great Number, some from Principle, and others, taking the Advantage of this Principle, from Irreligion, who give no Evidence of their owning a God, and consequently no Security for their Faith and Honesty: And as the one cannot be known from the other, Distrust, Injustice and Confusion must ensue. And if penal Laws are added, the best and most conscientious will be punished, while Atheists are sheltered, and Hypocrites encouraged by an easy Compliance. But if those of the same Perswasion in religious Matters are allowed to worship God after that Form which they believe to be most agreeable to his Will; then all have it in their Power to give a publick Declaration of their believing in God, and the proper Assurances of their Honesty to Men. And therefore, those who shew a Contempt of all publick Worship, must be regardless of the Interests of Society, which otherwise cannot be secured; and give too great Evidence of their being under no Impressions of a divine Providence; which is downright Atheism and of the worst kind.

I am far from thinking that all they who disregard publick Worship are Atheists from Principle; but I take the Liberty to say,

they are Atheists to Society, and their Example produces all the mischievous Effects, which the rankest Atheism can be supposed to do. It is of no Moment whether one believes there is a God or not, if he does not acknowledge him in his Actions. Atheistical Principles are vented, at worst, only in a Corner among a select Number of Friends; nor was any considerable Harm ever done to Society this Way: But when publick Worship is despised, especially by such as are in elevated Stations, the Contagion is sure to spread. Such Force has Example; and such is our Propensity to Imitation, that the Actions of a Superior will have infinitely greater Weight than all the Arguments he can use to determine us.

And therefore, as it is against the Interest of Society to lay Restraints upon Mens Consciences in their Manner of worshipping God; it is much more so, to suffer them in Society who worship no God at all, when such Neglect is known to proceed, not from any Scruple of Conscience, but from Irreligion. Accordingly, in every civilized Nation, Atheists have been extirpated, as Enemies to Mankind, not because they disbelieved the Being of God (for that is an Act of the Mind, in which Men are not concerned) but lest the Society should be infected  
with

with Atheism; and thereby the Ties of Religion, by which Men are held together, and prevented from being hurtful to one another, should be dissolved. And if no Indulgence ought to be given to such as disown all publick Worship, is there not the same Reason that they should suffer in proportion, who by a frequent Neglect of it, or an irreverent Behaviour when present, set a publick Example of Irreligion and Atheism? This is an Event which they themselves would certainly not be fond of (for even an Atheist would not chuse to live among Atheists) and yet such Persons are fatally instrumental in promoting it (a).

*Lastly*, There is this singular Advantage arising to Society from the publick Worship of Christians, that, at the same time they meet together for worshipping God, all the Duties they owe to him, and to one ano-

(a) If publick Worship is a Duty which we owe to God, and to Society, it must bind at all such Times as are set apart for the Performance of it, unless where want of Health, or some other insuperable Difficulty lies in the way: For if it is in our option, when to perform, and when to neglect it, it cannot be a Duty; it cannot be a Law, but a thing indifferent. Nor can it in any Propriety of Speech be called Persecution, that all Men without Exception, and under proper Penalties, should be obliged to a punctual Attendance upon the Worship of God, while no particular Form is imposed upon them. Every Society must have a Right to preserve itself, and to prevent and punish such Crimes as are destructive to its being.



ther, are inculcated upon them, and most strictly enjoined, under the Pain of his eternal Displeasure; such as Subjection to Magistrates, Honour to Superiors, Honesty, Justice and Sincerity in all our Dealings; Affability, Gentleness, Meekness, Forgiveness of Injuries, Provision for the Poor, and the like. Nay, the Disposition of the Heart, the Temper and Affections, which human Laws can never reach, are here taken into Consideration, and as expressly brought under Rule as publick Actions: And in an especial Manner, Love, Benevolence, Pity and Compassion, which are the Source and Foundation of social Happiness, are recommended as indispensibly necessary, and the proper Principles by which our Behaviour to others ought to be directed.

I think none will deny that Mankind would be happy indeed, if these divine Laws were universally obeyed; the only Motive that can inforce Obedience to them, is a Regard to God, the only Means of impressing their Minds with such Regard, is publick Worship.

This is so unquestionably true, that if we take a View of the History of the World, we shall find that States and Empires have always flourished while publick Worship was maintained with due Reverence, and  
have

have been brought to Ruin by Irreligion alone. This we are expressly told was the immediate and sole Occasion of the Grandeur and Destruction of the *Jewish* State (a). So it happened to the *Egyptians*, the wisest and most learned Nation among the Ancients (b). And so it happened to the  
*Per-*

(a) The History of the Jews in the sacred Scriptures is a History of the immediate all-governing Providence of God, and every where presents to us this Observation, That Men are happy or miserable, as they worship and serve, or neglect and disobey the Almighty. Nor is any antient Book in the World to be compared with the Old Testament for Credibility, since it is no other than the very publick Records of a Nation.

(b) The *Egyptians* were the first that we know of, who understood the Rules of Government; and they seem to have brought Arts and Sciences, and especially civil Policy, to as great Perfection as they have ever arrived at since. The Excellency of their Laws, and the Reverence with which they were obeyed, is scarce credible: The Number and Populousness of their Cities is astonishing: Their stupenduous Works, both for Use and Ornament, have never been equalled to this Day, and their Ruins are still the Wonder of the World. What regard was paid to publick Worship by that wise People, may appear from this one Instance, That their Kings were obliged every Morning, with all the Nobility and great Men about Court, to repair to the Temple, where Sacrifices and Prayers were offered up by the Priest, and proper Lectures were read out of their sacred Books. It is easy to judge how universal the Influence of such Authority would be, from which even the King himself was not exempted; with what Reverence publick Worship would be received by the People; and how deep the Sense of Religion would be upon their Minds. The happy Effects of which were, that they lived (as is said) above twelve hundred Years in Peace, good Order and Prosperity; till the Ambition of one of their Kings [*Se/sostris*] gave them the Dominion

*Persians* (a). Upon the Foundation of publick Religion, both these Kingdoms stood firm and prosperous for many Ages, till the Neglect of it introduced Luxury, Effeminacy and Impiety, which rendred the first an easy Prey to the other; and *that* as easy a Conquest to the *Grecians*. Under these, several great Kingdoms sprang up, which appeared suddenly like fiery Meteors, and as suddenly vanished; and a great Part of the World continued for a long Time a deplorable Scene of Blood and Massacre: And no Wonder, for Religion was in those Days utterly lost, and Impiety and Wickedness ruled without Controul.

But we shall see this Truth in its full Light,

minion of the World; and then publick Worship came to be neglected, and degenerated into a most ridiculous Superstition; foreign Conquests brought home foreign Vices; Divisions and civil Wars brake out amongst them, till at last they were (without Difficulty) enslaved by the *Persians*. *Vid. Herodot. l. 2. Diodor. Sicul. l. 2. S. 2.*

(a) *Cyrus*, the Founder of the *Persian* Empire, was no less eminent for Religion and Piety, than for military Exploits; And in settling his new erected Kingdom, his chief Care was to establish the Worship of the Deity, and an awful Regard to divine Providence. (*Vid. Xenophon. Cyroped. l. 1, 4, 8, &c.*) and to this it is plainly owing that that vast Empire, raised all at once, took Root immediately, and continued firm and united for many Ages (which has no where else ever happened to sudden Conquests, such as these of *Sesostris*, *Alexander*, *Tamerlane*, &c.) till at last overwhelmed with Impiety and its Offspring Luxury, and thereby ripe for Destruction, it was ruined by a Handful of *Grecians*.

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in the Instance of the *Roman* Empire. Never was there a State in which the Institutions of Worship were more solemnly and strictly enjoined, nor more religiously observed; never was Religion in higher Esteem; their publick and private Actions, their Affairs of Peace and War; every thing they undertook was sanctified, as it were, by an Act of Worship (a). Even their Magistrates, in their Speeches to the People, always began with solemn Prayer (b). And it is almost incredible what a happy Influence this Regard to Religion had upon them. The Belief of a divine Providence, and a Reverence of the Deity, were to them in place of all other Laws: What they were once perswaded was acceptable to him, *that* no Danger or Terror could hinder them to perform; and, on the other Hand, no Persuasion nor Threats could induce them to do a Thing which they thought he disapproved of. An Instance of Perjury is scarce to be found in their History (c); and but few of Prevarication; and these such as, amongst us, would perhaps be thought innocent, but were held by them as impious and detestable.

(a) *Liv. l. 1. 4, 5. passim.*

(b) *Liv. l. 39. Sect. 15.*

(c) *Polyb. Histor. l. 6.*

But

But I need not enlarge upon Particulars ; it is well known how religious a People they were, and how prosperous while they continued so. But by degrees Religion became contemptible ; publick Worship began to be neglected, and at last to be ridiculed, especially by the great Men (for Irreligion for the most Part begins at them;) and then all Manner of Vice brake in amongst them : That glorious Love of the Publick, to which so many of their brave Men had sacrificed their Lives, gave Way to a contracted selfish Spirit ; and they were reckoned Fools amongst them, as they are now amongst us, who shewed any disinterested Concern for their Country. Even Atheism itself became fashionable ; and in the end Liberty fell a Sacrifice to Impiety. After this we have a mournful Prospect of a State without Religion, a State of lawless Power, of wanton merciless Cruelty, on the one Hand ; of the most abject Slavery on the other ; and of detestable Wickedness, on both. And tho' it maintained for some time an outward Shew of its former Greatness, yet its Foundations were sapped ; Religion being thrown out, the Soul of it was gone ; and nothing remained but a dead Carcase, which, though it did not immediately putrify, yet was gradually

dually corrupting, till at last it fell in Pieces, and mouldered into Dust.

So true it is what an Author, who had carefully studied the Nature of Government, and who was never suspected of Enthusiasm, says upon this Subject, *The Happiness of the Romans was principally owing to the Religion established by their first Kings.*— For as the Observance of divine Worship is the chief Cause of the Greatness of States, so the Contempt of it brings them to Ruin; for where the Fear of God is wanting, a Kingdom cannot be supported (a). And the same Author tells us, *That Princes and States who would preserve themselves, ought above all things to maintain what belongs to Religion in the highest Veneration; for there cannot be a greater Sign of the Ruin of a State, than to see divine Worship despised.*— Those therefore who are in Power, should take Care to keep publick Religion inviolable; and this being done, it will be easy for them to keep the People religious, and consequently virtuous and united. And with respect to his own Country, he says, *That by the ill Example of the Court of Rome, this Province has*  
lost

(a) Machiavil. Discors. sopra Liv. cap. 11]



*lost all Devotion and Religion, which draws after it numberless Inconveniences and Disorders; because, where Religion is, there you may expect every Virtue, and where it is not, you may be sure of the contrary (a).*

I am sensible that what I have said upon this Head is somewhat uncommon in a Discourse from the Pulpit; but as I undertook to prove that the Happiness of Society depends upon the Regard that is shewn to publick Worship; and as abstract Reasoning is not understood by some, and is evaded by others; I thought the most direct and convincing Proof would be an Appeal to Facts and Authorities: And from these Hints I have given, nay from the whole History of Mankind, it will appear that a Society cannot subsist, where the Worship of God comes to be neglected (b), and that our In-

(a) *Machiavil. Discors. sopra Liv. cap. 12.*

(b) It is commonly said that Luxury and Corruption are the principal Causes of the Ruin of States; but upon a nearer View, it will be found that Irreligion is the Cause of Luxury and Corruption; and that the only Defence against them, is a strict Regard to publick Religion. While that is preserved, the Way to these Vices is blocked up: The Minds of Men are fortified against them; and it is not until they are once admitted, that they come to have a baneful Influence upon Religion, so as in their Turn to promote a Contempt of it.

terests and Liberties, our Happiness and Safety immediately depend upon it (a).

III. It remains now, in the *third* Place, that we enquire, *What Regard is due to them who minister in the sacred Office.*

But I am aware, that they who would be thought more wise than the rest of Mankind, will reckon it great Weakness or great Arrogance to undertake the Defence of a Set of Men, who are now every where spoken against. The World is so strangely changed within this last Age, that that Character which has ever been held sacred and venerable, is at last become the Object of Hatred and Scorn. The *Priests* are represented as a Nuisance to Society, spiritual Tyrants, lording it over the Consciences of Men, and actuated by nothing but Pride and Lust of Power; and hence *Priestcraft*, *priestly Pride* and *Power*, and such elegant Terms of Reproach, are thought sufficient Answers to the most solid Reasons in Defence of Religion. Nay, they have again and again been brought upon the very Stage, and employed

(a) It will be difficult to find any one Instance of a State devoted to the Worship of God, and relying upon his Providence, that has tamely submitted to a foreign Conqueror, or to domestick Ambition: And it will be as difficult to find a State once grown irreligious and corrupt, that has for any long Time preserved itself free.

to furnish out the most ludicrous Scenes in our dramatic Entertainments.

No doubt there have been bad and weak Men in the Priesthood, as well as among other Orders; and it is a Pity the Vices of such should not be punished with exemplary Severity: But is it just, for the Faults of particular Persons, to throw Contempt upon the Whole, and even upon the Office itself? Is Magistracy contemptible, because there have been wicked and foolish Magistrates? But I am not to contend for their Power, nor even to insist upon that Obedience, which the Apostle in the Text enjoins: All I design is to shew that this Order, as it is both venerable in itself, and absolutely necessary in Society, deserves Honour and Respect.

And here again I own, it does not become us, either in Prudence or Duty, to seek Honour from Men; but as publick Worship necessarily supposes some to regulate and preside in it, and if these are despised, Worship cannot be honoured, nor have any good Effect upon the Worshippers; for these Reasons, if we would rescue the one from Contempt, we must rescue the other also; for they are every way inseparable.

If we allow publick Worship to be reasonable in itself, and necessary for the Good of Society, (as I have endeavoured to prove it  
to



to be) we ought likewise to allow that there must be an Order of Men intrusted with the Direction and Management of it: The former as necessarily infers the latter, as an Action does an Agent: And we may as well suppose that Government and the Laws can be maintained without Magistrates, as that publick Worship can be performed without Priests. This therefore being self-evident, we shall not further insist upon it.

Now, as their chief Business is to offer up the spiritual Sacrifice of Praise and Prayer for the People, and in their Name, thus presenting, as it were, their Addresses to Almighty God, one should think that this Employment of all others, is the farthest from being in itself contemptible. I will not mention the honourable Names which upon this Account have been given them, because the World is not now disposed to allow them Titles of Respect; only I may be allowed to insinuate, that if those who serve in a Prince's Household, and about his Person, derive Honour from their Station, and are despised by none who have a Regard for their Master, they who are employed in sacred Things ought to be considered by all who have a due Reverence for the Supreme Being, as more immediately belonging to him: And it cannot well be conceived how they should

be despised by any, unless by such as have a secret Aversion to the Work in which they are employed, or to him whom they serve.

And if we consider them as necessary for the Good of Society (and surely they are as necessary as publick Worship itself) *that* should oblige us to treat them with Honour and Esteem. If they are appointed to instruct Men in their Duty to God and to one another; and if it is necessary they should be so instructed; will not this End be wholly defeated, if they are once rendered contemptible? The best things said, the wisest Admonitions given, by one whom we despise, will not be much regarded: It is the Opinion and Esteem we have of the Person, that gives Weight to Advice; and the Generality, at least, will scarce hear with Patience what they are taught by him whom they contemn. If therefore they who serve at the Altar are vile in our Eyes, the Altar itself will soon become despicable. But there is too much Ground to suspect, that the Spite which is shewn against the sacred Character, arises from a Contempt of the Office; and that Priests are hated, because publick Worship is first disliked.

As to their enslaving the Consciences of Men, it is not denied that some of them have attempted it, that they have shamefully corrupted

rupted the Christian Revelation, and erected a temporal and tyrannical Dominion upon spiritual Pretences. But as these Kingdoms are happily and entirely delivered from that Yoke of Bondage, and no Authority is claimed over the Conscience, it is altogether unfair to charge the Crimes of a particular Party upon those who abhor them, and upon all Occasions have declared and exerted themselves against them. And is not every Person amongst us provided with a divine Standard, according to which he is allowed to measure their Conduct; and is any Deference required to their Deeds, but in as far as they agree with that unerring Rule? Judges are every where Interpreters of the Laws, and to their Interpretations we must submit; but no such Power is pretended to by the Interpreters of the sacred Oracles; they appeal to every Man's Reason and leave his Conscience to determine him. There cannot therefore be a Charge more groundless than that of enslaving Mens Consciences; nor can there be a more unjust Inference than that, because the *Romish* Priests perverted Religion to serve the Purposes of their Ambition, therefore all Priests ought to be detested. Would not this be the same thing as to declare against all Government, because some Governments have been tyrannical?



But as those who shew the greatest Zeal in reviling the Christian Priesthood, pretend to be great Admirers of the Customs and Constitutions of the Ancients, we shall willingly join Issue with them upon this Question; for it is an undeniable Fact, that in almost all ancient Governments, publick Religion, and a publick Spirit, Irreligion and Selfishness, a Reverence for things sacred and Liberty, a Contempt of things sacred and Slavery went hand in hand. And as to the Priests; we are told, that amongst the *Egyptians*, in the most early Times, they were Judges and Magistrates (a); that Kings both there, and generally in other Countries also, were chosen out of their Number; or if not, they were consecrated into the priestly Office before they ascended the Throne (b). And there was a kind of Necessity for this Circumstance, the Priests being the highest Order of Nobility. In the most ancient Authors we find Kings and Generals offering publick Sacrifices, and performing other Functions of the Priesthood: And to affront or insult a Priest, was reckoned one of the highest Acts of Impiety (c). Among the an-

(a) *Ælian. var. hist. l. 14.*

(b) *Plutarch. de Is. & Osir.*

(c) How impious any Mark of Disrespect to a Priest was esteem-

ancient *Britons* and *Gauls*, in like Manner, the Priests were the first in rank of Nobility; they were Judges of all Controversies; they appointed Rewards and Punishments, and their Decrees in all Cases were final (*a*). If we look to the *Roman* Constitution, we shall see some Parts of the Priests Office were always performed by their Kings; that the Priests were chosen from amongst the Nobility; and the whole Order enjoyed particular Honours and Privileges, some of which extended even to their Families (*b*).

None, I hope, will take Exception at these Instances of Respect, which I have noticed to have been shewn to Priests in former Ages: I mention only Facts, and with no other View, than that the Enemies of the Gospel, who pay so much Deference to the Wisdom of the Heathens, may see, that in the best and most free Governments among *them*, the Priesthood was an Office of very high Honour: And all I would in-

esteemed by the Ancients, may be judged from this, That the Plague, and all the Misfortunes which happened to the *Grecians* in the *Trojan* Expedition through their Dissentions, are said to have been inflicted upon them as a Punishment for an Affront offered to the Priest of Apollo. *Vid. Homer. Iliad. l. i. v. 11.*

(*a*) *Cesar de bello Gall. l. 6.*

(*b*) *Liv. l. i. Aul. Gell.*

fer from it is, That in order to preserve a due regard for divine Worship, those who in a peculiar manner are concern'd in it, ought to be had in Esteem: So the Nature of the thing requires; and so the wisest Nations have always done.

Neither have I given any Ground to suspect that I have recommended publick Worship only as Matter of good Policy: I have shewn it to be reasonable in itself, and absolutely necessary, as we are rational accountable Beings; and whereas I have insisted upon the temporal Advantages that flow from it, my Reason was, that as those who shew the greatest Disregard to it, may be supposed to be most affected by what concerns their present Interests, so it was judged the most likely Way to gain upon them, to represent it in this Light also, and to endeavour to convince them, that their Conduct is destructive of every thing they themselves hold most valuable. It is no Objection against the Truth of Religion, but rather a very strong Argument for it, that it contributes to the present Happiness of Mankind, and is necessary to the Well-being of Society; for so do Honesty, Justice, Truth and Gratitude: And as these Virtues were not invented by Statesmen, but are founded in the Nature and unchangeable Relations of things;



things; so publick Worship, as it serves the same Ends is also derived from the same Original.

And this again may serve to prevent another Suspicion, That I have placed the Christian Revelation upon the same Footing with the Religion of Heathens: But my Subject did not lead me to speak of true or false Religions, but of publick Religion, or publick Worship in general, as founded upon the Belief of a superior invisible Power, who governs the World, in which all Religions agree: The Necessity of which Worship being established, let the greatest Enemies of Christianity determine, if any Form ever known amongst Men, is to be compared with that which the New Testament prescribes; and if upon this very account it does not claim our Regard as a Revelation from Heaven. Let its internal Marks be examined; let it be tried by the severest Rules; only let it be tried without Prejudice (which indeed the most part who engage in this Enquiry, seem not to be free from) and it will be found to be a Religion every Way worthy of God, and most wonderfully suited to the Circumstances and Necessities of Mankind: Nay further, That all the Knowledge we have of the true God, which we accustom ourselves to boast of as

natural Notions, are really derived from the Scriptures, and no where to be met with, except in *these*, or in the Writings of such as are known to have copied from them.

And, with respect to the external Evidence; this one Circumstance is unanswerable, That whereas it now prevails in many Places of the Earth; by the concurring Testimony of all Histories, it must have had a Beginning much about the Time assigned for it in the sacred Records: And as its keenest Adversaries are not able to produce any Account, or give any plausible Reason of its Rise and Progress, different from what is contained in the New Testament, does it not follow by all the Rules of right Reasoning, that that Account must be true, authentic and genuine? To say, that if ancient Books and Histories had not been lost, the Falshood of it might have appeared, is no more than simply to assert a bare Possibility of its being false: But all external Evidence in things of this Nature being founded only in Probability, and not in Demonstration, a high Degree of probable Evidence is not in the least invalidated by a Possibility to the contrary. But Time will not allow to insist further upon this Argument.

Upon the whole then, they who have any Value for their immortal Souls, who  
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would not chuse to live and die like Beasts; without Religion, without any Hope of a future Life; they who have any Fear of Almighty God, or any Sense of Gratitude for the Blessings they have enjoyed, or may yet expect; they who have any Compassion for their Fellow-creatures, who would not be accessory to their eternal Ruin, cannot but reckon divine Worship one of the most solemn and most indispensable of all Duties, and the Contempt of it impious to the last Degree. And if the Happiness of Society depend upon the religious Observance of it, every one who wishes well to Society ought to contribute his utmost Endeavours to have it maintain'd with all possible Reverence, and consequently to shew that Respect to those who are employed in divine Things, which is necessary to preserve a Veneration for these Things. If Kingdoms and States have been most prosperous, happy and free, while Worship was duly revered; if Depravity of Morals, Luxury, Avarice, Corruption and other Vices break in only when it comes to be neglected; if publick Religion is the best Fence, the only Security of publick Liberty; if they who have attempted to rob Mankind of this inestimable Blessing, have for the most Part begun with despising sacred things, removing the Restraints  
of



of Religion, and debauching, by their Example and otherwise, the Principles and Manners of Men; we may conclude, that wherever publick Worship, and those of a sacred Character are brought into Contempt, that State is tending to Ruin: For, as this has always been the Gradation from Prosperity and Liberty, to Misery and Slavery, we may be confident it always will be so.

And if those who are eminent in Society, especially they who act in a publick Character, are seen to despise the Worship of God, we may be assured that they are not only void of Religion, but likewise that they are either ignorant of the true Arts of Government, or have no Regard for the Society, or have a Design to bring it into Slavery. The World, as I observed before, have always been led by the Example of the Great; it may indeed be sometime before Irreligion descend from the higher to the lower Ranks; but if it once take Place among the former, it will certainly reach the latter at last: And then all the Ties that can hold Men together are broken; the Society must be dissolved, and fall a Prey to the first Invader, or to the Ambition of some of its own Members.

The greatest and wisest Men in former Times, were most eminent for Piety; they set glorious Examples before their Inferiors  
of

of Devotion, and a strict Regard to every Thing that was holy; and hence Religion and Virtue prevailed among the People; and Peace, good Order and Prosperity were the happy Effects. They therefore who act a contrary Part, and countenance a Disregard to sacred Things (whatever they themselves may design) are Enemies to their Country, Betrayers of publick Liberty, Abettors of Impiety and Immorality, and, as far as their Influence extends, promote universal Confusion and Desolation (a).

It is but a poor Comfort that the Ruin of a State comes on but by slow Degrees; “ and therefore we may in the mean while “ indulge our own Inclinations: Such Evils, “ if they should happen at all, will not probably fall out till long after our Time.” But this is depending too much on Uncertainty; the fatal Period may arrive sooner than we imagine: And tho’ it should not, does it give us no Pain to think that we are helping forward the Ruin of our Country,

(a) If we should even suppose (which can scarce be named without Horror) that publick Religion is useful only for keeping the People in Aw, and making them obedient to Government, yet will this End be answered, if Men of Character and Power despise it? Will not the People soon learn to follow their Example, and throw off the Restraints of Religion? Those therefore who own that it is a necessary Engine of State, and yet take Pains to mar and ruine this Engine, act a very absurd and contradictory Part.

and

and entailing Misery and Slavery upon our Posterity, when we ought to have done all in our Power to prevent it, when we might perhaps have prevented it.

I shall add only one other Consideration of the same Nature, but of a more immediate Influence. If a Person, who is a Father or Master of a Family, shews a Contempt of publick Worship, perhaps not from any ill Principle, but merely from Indolence, or because it is fashionable; yet, will not his Children and Servants observe it? And will they not thereby learn Impiety and Immorality? He may say, he will instruct them to the contrary: But what will his Instructions avail, when they are contradicted by his own Practice? Is not this the direct Way to train up his Children to a Contempt of Religion, and to teach his Servants to be unfaithful and dishonest to him? For what else can be expected from them, who have such a pernicious Example in their Eye?

I am loth to make any particular Application; but it is in vain to dissemble: If like Causes produce like Effects, there is too much Ground to dread the Consequence of the Manners of this Age. Every thing that is sacred is despised and turned into Ridicule: Our holy Religion, though in every Part of  
it



it the Marks of its divine Original are conspicuous, is insulted openly and with Impunity: Publick Worship, the Source of Religion, and the Bond and Cement of Society, is shamefully deserted and contemned; some disdain to be present when it is performed, or are present only as it suits their Humour, as if it were a thing altogether indifferent: Others, by an unbecoming Behaviour, seem to take a Pride in shewing to the World that they have nothing less in their Thoughts than to worship their Maker. The holy *Sabbath*, most wisely instituted for the Purposes of Devotion, is vilely and audaciously profaned by all manner of Abuse. And all this Irreligion abounds chiefly among such, whose Example has the most extensive Influence; at least it flowed from them at first; and a Vanity of being in the Fashion, has carried away Multitudes, who can give no other Reason for slighting publick Worship, but because polite People do the same. Thus has a Contempt of Religion, and hence Immoralities of every kind, infected all Conditions of Men. *For what can curb our Passions when Religion is removed? And what will not Men do, when they have shaken off the Fear of God?*

Indeed it is not to be much wondered at,  
that

that they who have cast off all other Regards to God and Man, should make light of divine Worship; but that Christians should at any Time, unless upon the most urgent Necessity, absent themselves from Christian Worship, is altogether astonishing: For as Worship in general is really a Test of one's believing an all-ruling Providence, Christian Worship is much more so of one's believing the Gospel: And therefore it is natural to think that those who neglect it, are truly Unbelievers, and have denied the Lord that bought them. At least, if they have not rejected the Principles of Religion in Speculation, they have renounced them in Practice, are headlessly carried down the Stream of Atheism; and though perhaps they intend it not, yet in Fact they join with Atheists and Infidels to extirpate that Religion by which they pretend to hope for eternal Life: So that they are extremely inconsistent with themselves, as their Behaviour evidently gives the Lie to their Faith.

And now, my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, since we live in these melancholy Times, when an impious Disregard is avowed, not only to revealed, but even to natural Religion; whereby both the present, and, what is far more lamentable, the eternal Interests of Men are in the utmost Danger

get, it is no Time for us to be unconcerned, or to be contending against Sects and Parties of Christians: It is high Time for all who have any Concern for the Salvation of Souls, to bestir themselves, and unite against the most dreadful of all Enemies (compared to which, even *Popery* itself is an innocent Thing) that attacks us with impudent Boldness, while we have few to stand by us; and it is too much to be suspected, that our own Divisions have in part occasioned, and certainly have greatly increased this Evil: And while we have been hating and distressing one another, we have contributed to that Contempt which is cast upon the whole.

It is far above my Capacity to think of an effectual Remedy, or how this Torrent of Impiety may be best stopped: But surely every one of us is bound to use all possible Endeavours to bring Men back to the Knowledge and Fear of the great God, and to a sacred Regard to his Worship. But all our Efforts will be in vain, unless our own Conduct is suitable to our Profession. If we are seen to be swayed by the Love of the things of this World, which above all others we ought to undervalue; if we are governed by selfish and angry Passions; if we endeavour to raise ourselves upon the Ruin of our Brethren;



thren; if we deviate from that Candour and Integrity, that Simplicity, and Purity of Manners, which becomes our Office; If, to gain the Favour or Esteem of Men, we in the least prostitute our Character, and allow ourselves in any Liberties inconsistent with that Severity of Life, which is required of Ministers of the Gospel: In a Word, if it is not our constant Care *to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, and to conform ourselves to those divine Rules of Conduct which are prescribed us in the holy Scriptures, and by which we may be assured the World will judge of us, we betray the Interests of Religion, we put a Sword into the Hands of its Enemies, and contribute more than all others to expose it to Contempt; and at the same Time we bring just Disgrace upon ourselves; for by acting unsuitably to our Character, we become truly ridiculous, and deserve to be infamous.

And next to the Conduct of our own Lives, it will be of the greatest Service to publick Worship, that we represent it, as indeed it is, highly rational, and conducive to the present, as well as to the future Happiness of Men. When it is shewn to have a direct Tendency to inspire us with worthy Sentiments of the Divine Being, with the Love, Reverence and Fear of him; to lead  
us

us to imitate him in our Lives, to be just and merciful, peaceable, forgiving and gentle; to promote the Interests of our Fellow-creatures; to subdue our unruly Passions; when it is shewn to have a Tendency to beget and promote in us those heavenly Dispositions which will render us Blessings to one another in this World, and qualify us for the Happiness of the World to come; when it is shewn in this Light, we may hope it will yet again force its Way into the Hearts and Consciences of Men.

*And may the Ordinances of the Gospel be mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ, that every Knee may be made to bow to him, and every Tongue to confess him, till the whole Earth be filled with his Glory. Amen.*

FINIS.

( 49 )

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